

# **FACTS ABOUT TIBET**

**TIBETAN YOUTH CONGRESS**

**1998**



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TIBET

Tibetan Youth Congress  
P.O. Mcleod Ganj  
Dharamsala 176 219  
H.P., India

## **Tibet**

### **At a Glance**

<b>Size</b>	2.5 Million Sq. Kms.
<b>Neighbours</b>	India, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma, E. Turkestan, China.
<b>Capital</b>	Lhasa
<b>Population</b>	6 Million
<b>Language</b>	Tibetan
<b>National Flag</b>	12 red and blue rays with 2 snow lions in the lower centre
<b>Provinces</b>	U-Tsang (Central) Dhotoe (Eastern) Dhome (N. Eastern)
<b>Head of State</b>	H.H. the Dalia Lama

## **The Historical and Legal Status of Tibet:**

Tibet was a fully independent country until the Chinese invaded it in 1949. China's violation of Tibet's territorial integrity was denounced as an aggression by virtually all states of the free world, including India. Sardar V Allabhai Patel, the then Deputy Prime Minister of India stated, "...Recent and bitter history (Chinese invasion of Tibet) also tells us that communism is no shield against imperialism and that the communists are as good and as bad imperialists as any other. Chinese ambitions in this respect not only cover the Himalayan slopes on our side but also include important parts of Assam. They have their ambitions in Burma also". Similarly Dr. Rammonohar Lohia strongly condemned and added, "The government of China has offended not only against international morality but also against India's interests by mobbing into Tibet".

### **Early Tibetan Kings:**

Tibet has a recorded history of statehood extending over 2000 years which began in 127 B.C.

During the 7th and 10th Century Tibet's empire reached its apogee and extended to China and other Central Asian Countries. Buddhism was introduced and made the State religion. The first monastery in Tibet was build at Samye. It was during this period, the Tibetan armies even seized the Chinese capital at Ch'ang-an (present-day Xian) in 763 A.D. A Peace Treaty was concluded with China in 821/2 and the inscription of the text of the treaty exists in three places: one outside the Chinese Emperor's palace gate in Ch'ang-an, another before the main gate of Jokhang temple in the capital of Tibet, Lhasa and the third on the Tibet-China border at Mount Gugu Meru.

During the period between 842 and 1247, the whole Tibetan empire collapsed following the assassination of King Wudum Tsen for his persecution of the Buddhists. The mighty Tibetan Empire disintegrated into small princedoms and a dark period fell over Tibet. During this period, Tibet's relations with its neighbouring countries, including China, was minimal.

### **Relations with the Mongols:**

Between 1247 and 1350, a succession of 20 Sakya lamas ruled Tibet and it was during their rule that the Mongols, who invaded many countries of

Europe and Asia, also invaded Tibet in 1207 followed by China in 1280. This is the period when both Tibet and China were in the same political grouping subjected to Mongolian rule. The Tibetans were able to free themselves from the Mongolian rule in 1358 when Phagmo Drupa succeeded the Sakya rule in Tibet. The Chinese followed suit some ten years later, when in 1368 when Phagmo Drupa succeeded the Sakya rule in Tibet. The Chinese followed suit some ten years later, when in 1368 they were able to drive out the Mongols and establish the native Ming dynasty. Today, the Chinese claims that 'Tibet has always been part of China' derive from this period when both Tibet and China were ruled by the Mongols. It is a ridiculous claim. By using similar arguments India could now lay claim to Burma on the grounds that they both were once part of the British Empire.

### **The Dalai Lamas**

In 1642, the great Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, assumed both spiritual and temporal authority over Tibet. He established the present system of Tibetan Government, known as Gaden Phodrang. After assuming the power, the Dalai Lama visited China to demand the Chinese recognition of his sovereignty. The Ming Emperor

of China not only accepted the Dalai Lama as a leader of the independent state, but also treated him as Divinity on Earth. In return the Dalai Lama used his influence to bring the warlike Mongols into acknowledging the Emperor's sway in China. Henceforth, there started a Priest-Patron Relationship—a new element into the relations of Tibet, China and Mongol—which the Chinese now manipulated to claim that 'Tibet has been a part of China'.

The glorious reign of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama was followed by a period of intrigue and instability.

### **Relations with the Manchus:**

In 1720, the Manchus who controlled China interfered in Tibetan affairs by sending troops to escort the young seventh Dalai Lama, who was born in Eastern Tibet, to Lhasa. When the Manchu troops marched out from Lhasa, they left behind a Resident or Amban—ostensibly to serve the Dalai Lama but in actual fact to look after their own interests. This was the beginning of Manchu interference in Tibetan affairs. The Manchus gained a nominal control over eastern Tibet during this period which. However, they were thrown out in 1865 when the Tibetans recaptured the lost territories. The Manchu intervention in Tibet again occurred in 1790 when the

Manchu Emperor's representatives (Ambans) took up residence in Lhasa and tried to engage in nefarious intrigues and meddle in Tibetan affairs. But Tibet never lost her sovereignty. The Manchu interference in Tibet ceased in 1912. The Tibetans expelled all the Chinese and Manchu troops from Lhasa and elsewhere in Tibet to the main. The Great Thirteenth Dalai Lama reasserted Tibet's independence through a special declaration in 1913.

The Tibetans also experienced such interference at the hands of Gorkhas and British. At every occasion Tibet never lost its sovereignty. This was confirmed by Tibet's signing of a treaty with Nepal in 1856 without reference to China or the Manchus and another treaty with the Mongolians at Urga (present day Ulan-bator) in 1913.

### **1913 and aftermath:**

Between the period of 1911-1949, there wasn't interference of any country in Tibet. Further, Tibetan independence was confirmed at the Treaty of Simla (July 3, 1914) which was concluded between Tibet and British India. In 1942, during the World War II, the supply route between India and China via Burma was cut off by the Japanese. The British government requested the Government of Tibet for permission to open a military supply route through Zayul

(Southern Tibet) which was refused by the Tibetan Government. Tibetans trade delegations visited India, the United Kingdom, the United States and China. They were received by all these countries as an official delegation of Tibet. Besides, the representatives of the government of Tibet also took part in the Inter-Asian Conference held in New Delhi on March 23, 1947 followed by Afro-Asian Conference held in Delhi in 1948.

### **The Chinese Invasion of Tibet:**

In September, 1949, Communist China, without any provocation, invaded eastern Tibet and captured Chamdo on 19 October 1950. On November 11, 1950, the Tibetan Government protested to the United Nations against the Chinese aggression. Although El Salvador raised the question, discussions on the issue in the General Assembly was postponed at the instances of Great Britain and India.

On November 17, 1950, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama assumed full Spiritual and Temporal poers as the Head of State although he was barely sixteen years old. On May 23, 1951, a Tibetan delegation, which had gone to Peking to hold talks on the incision, was forced to sign the so-called "17-Point Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful

Liberation of Tibet" - with threat of more military action in Tibet. The Chinese then used this document to carry out their plans to turn Tibet into a colony of China disregarding the strong resistance by the Tibetan people.

On September 9, 1951 thousands of Chinese troops marched into Lhasa. On March 10, 1959, the nation-wide Tibetan resistance culminated in the Tibetan National Uprising against the Chinese in Lhasa. The Chinese retaliated with ruthless force. Thousands of men, women and children were massacred in the streets of Lhasa and elsewhere.

On March 17, 1959, the Dalai Lama left Lhasa to seek political asylum in India. He was followed by over 80,000 Tibetan refugees. Never before in their long history had so many Tibetans been forced to leave their homeland under such difficult circumstances. There are now more than 100,000 Tibetan refugees all over the world.

## **The Chinese rule in Tibet:**

### **At A Glance:**

- \* More than 1.2 million Tibetans have been killed.
- \* More than 6,000 monasteries have been destroyed.
- \* Thousands of Tibetans are still imprisoned for exercising their fundamental rights.
- \* Tibet's natural resources and fragile ecology are being irreversibly destroyed.
- \* There is evidence suggesting that Tibet is being used for dumping of nuclear wastes.
- \* Tibetans (6 million) have been outnumbered by Chinese (7.5 million) in Tibet.
- \* Tibet, once a peaceful buffer state between India and China, has been transformed into a vast military base.

## **47 Years of the Chinese Colonization of Tibet**

Alexander Solzhenitsyn described the Chinese rule in Tibet "more brutal and inhumane than any other communist regime in the world". In 1960's, the International Commission of Jurists found, after extensive investigations, that China had committed acts of genocide in Tibet. The United Nations passed three resolutions in 1959, 1961 and 1965 expressing their "grave concern" over the violations of fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people and stated that the Tibetan people were deprived of their inalienable rights to self-determination. Notwithstanding all these universal condemnations China continued its dubious rule in Tibet.

During the past 47 years over 1.2 million Tibetans died in Tibet. Over 6,000 monasteries and the institutes of learning have been destroyed and precious artifacts have been vandalised and sold in art markets in Hongkong and western countries. 60% of Tibetan religious and historical literatures have been burned. Tibetans are denied of the basic rights of expression, speech, movement, religion etc.

Tibetan women are subjected to forced abortion and sterilisation. Tibetan children are denied of their childhood and basic education. 70% of the Tibetans are still illiterate. Arbitrary arrest, repression, torture, intimidation, imprisonment have been the regular feature for the last 47 years. The state has directly interfered with the religious freedom of individuals and imposed a fake Panchen Lama on Nov 29, 95. Arrested abbot of Tashi Lumpo monastery Chatral Rinpoche. 11th Panchen Gedun Choekyi Nyima and his entire family, just disappeared, believed to be under house arrest in China. Thousands of Tibetans still languish in various Chinese prisons. Most of them are young people, who are below 25 years of age. Majority of Tibetans still live in their old homes while Chinese reside in new colonies with modern amenities. Tibetans are forced to live in the high hills while Chinese occupy all the low and fertile lands. 7.5 million Chinese have outnumbered 6 million Tibetans in Tibet. Tibet has been amputated to six parts and what the Chinese refers to (Tibet Autonomous Region) constitute only about half of the original Tibet. The other five divisions are incorporated to neighbouring Chinese provinces. Tibet's fragile environment has been divested. Majority of Tibet's forest have been cleared and mineral resources exploited. Tibet's wildlife has

nearly become extinct and today Tibet looks more barren then ever.

### **Population Transfer**

One of the most alarming features of China's present colonial policy is the largescale, unprecedented transfer of Chinese population in Tibet. The real fear is that if the present Chinese policy is successful Tibetans will be reduced to a small and insignificant minority in their own country in the same ways as the Manchus (35 Chinese to 1 Manchu), the Turkic peoples (3 to 1) and the Mongolians (5 to 1) have been. The object of this policy is to forcibly "resolve" China's massive territorial claims over Tibet by means of a massive and irreversible population shift. The current policy began in 1983 as the "final solution " to China's Tibet problem. The encouragement to the Chinese civilian to settle in Tibet was admitted by Deng Xiaoping and other Chinese government officials. As a result of the implementation of this policy, today 6 million Tibetans in Tibet are outnumbered by 7.5 million Chinese. In the Tibetan province of Amdo which is now turned into a Chinese province called Qinghai, out of the total population of 4.45 million in 1990 (according to China's own statistic) only 20% are Tibetans and rest are Chinese. The situa-

tion is even worst in Kham province where all the major towns like Dartsedo, Derge, Kanze and Markham are reported to be inhabited by 95-100% Chinese. Today, Chinese population in Kham alone is reported to be well over 3.6 million. The situation in U-Tsang (in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region) in the Central Tibet is comparatively better. However, even in U-Tsang, Chinese have outnumbered the Tibetans in all the major towns and cities. The Chinese population in U-Tsang is estimated over 2 million.

The situation is further deteriorating, as Beijing is accelerating the population transfer by shifting more Chinese civilian, this time to Central Tibet. In 1992 alone thousands of fresh Chinese civilians settled in Central Tibet. Tibetans in Tibet fear that over a million Chinese displaced by the massive Three Gorges Project will be re-located in Central Tibet. Economic projects are initiated in Tibet mainly to entice Chinese immigrants to move to Tibet rather than to benefit Tibetans.

### **Environmental Destruction**

Before the Chinese invasion, Tibet had the most successful system of environmental protection. Formal protection of wildlife and wildlands through parks and reserves were unnecessary as Tibetan

Buddhism taught the people about the interdependence of all living things and the interrelationships among the whole spectrum of plant and animal life, human beings, as well as "non-living being" elements. People lived in close harmony with the nature.

Today, under the Chinese rule, the systematic destruction of environment of Tibet is unprecedented. The rich wildlife, forests, plants, minerals and water resources have all suffered irreplaceable degradation and Tibet's fragile ecological balance is being seriously disturbed.

Research indicates that the Chinese authorities denuded some 54 Billion dollars worth of timber at the end of 1985 from the rich forests reserves of Tibet. In Amdo province alone, nearly 50 million trees have been felled since 1955 and millions of acres of forest area amounting to at least 70% cleared. A similar condition prevails in other parts of Tibet, particularly in eastern and southern Tibet. The massive and unchecked deforestation in Tibet is causing irreversible soil erosion and also increases the deposits of silt in the rivers, which in turn causes landslides and reduces potential farming land. Since Tibet is the source of the major rivers in Asia, there is a serious threat to environmental conditions in South and South-Eastern Asia - as seen recently in the tragic floods in Bangladesh. The deforestation

in Tibet also increased the risk of imbalancing the monsoon which then may herald disaster to Indian agriculture.

The large influx of Chinese population in Tibet has compelled the Tibetans to restrict their grazing land and thus in turn encourages overgrazing the available pasture land. The continuing practice of overgrazing results not only in dramatic reduction in the grass yield but also accelerates the decertification of whole of Tibet. This pattern will have serious effect on the global climatic condition.

The systematic and large scale mining in Tibet began in the early 1960s and has been continuing since then. Today, the Chinese authorities are extracting over 126 different types of minerals in Tibet which includes uranium and oil. The unrestrained exploitation of mineral resources in Tibet poses serious threat to the survival of the remaining rain forest in Tibet.

The flourishing wildlife of Tibet have been virtually wiped out by the Chinese. There were once bears, wolves, wild geese, ducks, blue sheep, antelopes, snow leopards, panda etc. Most of them have now become almost extinct.

### **Militarization of Tibet**

China has turned the once peaceful and buffer

state between India and China into a vast military zone. China's occupation forces serve to keep Peking's control over the Tibetan people and to further China's strategic aims in the region. The militarization of the Tibetan plateau profoundly affects the geopolitical balance of the region and cause serious international tension.

With the Chinese occupation of Tibet, Indian and Chinese troops today face each other on the Himalayan border for the first time in history. The first ever bloody war between the two countries was fought in 1962, three years after the Chinese occupation of Tibet. China's ongoing assistance to Pakistan in building up nuclear power, large concentration of military personnel and nuclear build up in Tibet, military infiltration in India and persistent assistance to the military regime of Burma and particularly to build up a naval base in the Bay of Bengal further destabilize the Indian sub-continent.

Today Chinese military presence in Tibet includes an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 troops, of which 200,000 are permanently stationed in Central Tibet near the Indian border; 17 secret radar stations; 14 military airfields; 5 missile bases (Kongpo Nyitri, Powo Tramo, Rudok, Golmu and Nagchu) with the majority of them near the Indian border; at least

8 ICBMs, 70 medium range missiles and 20 intermediate range missiles. Besides, China also utilizes Tibet for Chemical warfare exercise and dumping nuclear waste from other countries. The recent report published by the International Campaign for Tibet, an independent organisation based in Washington, USA, confirms the existence of a Chinese nuclear station in Tibet, "Ninth Academy" near Lake Kokonor in Amdo province.

## **Exiles Tibet At a Glance**

Population	120,000
Government	Democracy
Head of State	H.H.the Dalai Lama
Seat of the Government	Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India
Elections	Tibetan People's Deputies & Cabinet Ministers
International Offices	New York, London, Geneva, Paris, Zurich, Moscow, Budapest, Tokyo Canberra, Kathmandu, New Delhi
Literacy rate	60 percent
Government publications	Tibetan Bulletin (English, Hindi, French,) Sheja (Tibetan)

## **37 Years of Struggle & Reconstruction**

Following the violent suppression of the Tibetan people's uprising against the Chinese occupation of Tibet on March 10, 1959, H. H. the Dalai Lama and the members of the Tibetan government followed by 80,000 Tibetans escaped Tibet and sought political asylum in India and neighbouring countries. In exile, the Tibetan government was reorganised on modern democratic principles. A new Charter of Tibetans in Exile has been adopted to govern the functioning of the government. The government-in-exile which administers all matters pertaining to Tibetans and leads the struggle for the restoration of Tibetan independence, is headed by H. H. the Dalai Lama. He is assisted by a Council of Ministers elected by the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies. The Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies serve as the Tibetan Parliament in exile and the members are democratically elected by the people. To Tibetans, in and outside Tibet, the Government-in-Exile is the sole legitimate government of Tibet.

The Tibetan Government-in-Exile comprises of several departments—Home, Education, Religion & Culture, Health, Security, Finance, Information & International Relation. Apart from these departments, there are several autonomous institution—Department of Audit, Public Service Commission and Election Commission—founded as per the special provisions of the Charter.

There is an independent judiciary in the form of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission.

Tibetan refugees are scattered all over the world with majority in India, Nepal and Bhutan. In India, they are rehabilitated in 22 agricultural settlements, 21 agro-industrial centres and 10 handicraft centres. Over 83 Tibetan Schools have been established to educate the young Tibetans in both modern and traditional education. The establishment of more than 160 monasteries and cultural centres accommodates over 10,000 monks and nuns and assists in the promotion and preservation of rich Tibetan heritage and culture which faces imminent threat of extinction in Tibet under the Chinese occupation.

Apart from the various settlements and cultural institutions, there are several non-governmental organisations—Tibetan Youth Congress, Tibetan Women's Association, etc. During the past 37 years, Tibetan refugees have done well in pre-

serving our own culture and identity. Many international aid agencies involved with Tibetan refugees regard the Tibetan case as one of the most successful refugee rehabilitation in the current world history.

### **International Support**

Over the years, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has travelled extensively all over the world speaking about the tragedy of Tibet and preaching peace and non-violence. His contribution to global peace and harmony was recognised when he was presented with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.

During the past years, the Tibetan issue has gained increasing international attention. Tibet Support Groups have been formed in at least 40 countries. Parliaments of several countries have adopted resolution in support of Tibet. World Parliamentarians Conference on Tibet (WPCT) has been held twice in New Delhi and Lithuania. Many countries have called upon China to respect the Tibetan people's fundamental rights.

### **Sino-Tibetan Dialogue:**

In exile, after a gap of around two decades, the Chinese authorities sent feelers through their officials in Hongkong expressing their desire to establish contact with H.H. the Dalai lama. Tibetan

Government-in-exile, headed by the Dalai Lama, responded positively and this resulted in the visits of successive fact-finding delegations to Tibet and exploratory missions to China. Through out the Tibetan government's dealing with the Chinese, a sincere and realistic attitude was adopted. H.H. the Dalai Lama has gone a long way in accommodating Chinese interests in his series of initiatives like the Five-Point Peace Plan of 1987 and the subsequent Strasbourg Proposal of 1988. Instead of responding positively, the Chinese authorities has been trying to reduce the issue of Tibet to that of the personal wellbeing of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The attitude of the Chinese authorities was made clear in September 1992 by bringing out a so-called white paper on the situation of Tibet. This document not only reiterated China's oft-quoted claims over Tibet, but also distorted Tibetan history to suit the present political interests of China. As a result H.H. the Dalai Lama during his 10th March statement of 1994 said " I have left no stone unturned in my attempts to reach on understanding with the Chinese. His Holiness further added that " If this fails, than I will no longer be able to pursue this policy with a clear conscience. It will be my responsibility to consult my people on the future course of our freedom struggle."

On the basis of this policy guidelines the Tibetan Government in exile has scheduled a four point referendum whereby the Tibetans will choose their future course of action. The four points are:—

1. Independence
  2. Self Determination
  3. Satyagraha (Insistence on Truth) and.
  4. Middle Path
- Tibetans will vote in August' 96 and choose their destiny.

## Recommended books on Tibet

My Land and My People

— *His Holiness the Dalai Lama*

Freedom in exile

— *His Holiness the Dalai lama*

In Exile from the land of Snow

— *John Avedon*

Tibet, A Political History

— *W.D. Shakappa*

Tibet: The Facts

— *Paul Ingram*

Tibet: Past & Present

— *Sir Charles Bell*

The Status of Tibet

— *Michael Van Walt Van Praag*

Tears of Blood

— *Mary Craig*

Red Star Over Tibet

— *Dawa T. Norbu*

## **Tibetan Periodicals & Magazines**

**Tibetan Review (English Monthly)**

Tibetan SOS Youth Hostel

Sector 14 Extn., Rohini

Delhi-85,

INDIA

**Tibetan Bulletin (Eng, Hindi, French)**

Department of Information and

International Relations

Central Tibetan Administration

Gangchen Kyishong

Dharamsala, 176 215

H.P., INDIA

**Rangzen (English Quarterly)**

Tibetan Youth Congress

P.O. Mcleod Ganj - 176 219

Distt. Kangra, Dharamsala

H.P., INDIA

**Tibet Journal (English Quarterly)**  
**Library of Tibetan Works & Archives**  
**Gangchen Kyishong**  
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**INDIA**

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*“Tibet in the future must be both democratic and demilitarize. Without freedom and democracy, one of the most important human qualities—creativity—cannot be exercised to its fullest extent. That is why we have intensified our efforts to instill democratic values in the Tibetan community in exile during the past years. Like-wise, Tibet must become a zone of Ahimsa (a Sanskrit word meaning peace and non-violence), to restore peace and stability not only to Tibet, but to the entire region.”*

**H.H. the Dalai Lama**  
**April 3, 1991**